

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

In response to the rejection of claim 27 under 35 U.S.C. §101, this claim has been amended so as to place it clearly within the realm of "statutory" subject matter even under current USPTO interpretations. At the same time, claim 28 has been cancelled since it would now become essentially duplicative.

Accordingly, all outstanding formal issues are now believed to have been resolved in the applicant's favor.

The rejection of claims 1-7, 9-19, 21-24 and 27-28 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as allegedly anticipated by Kraay '717 is respectfully traversed.

One application for the claimed invention is to provide a directory enquiry ("DQ") service for, in particular, mobile telephone numbers. It relies on a technical application of the "small-world theory", where it is said that everyone in the world is connected by no more than a six- or seven-link chain of acquaintances. The exemplary embodiment has two aspects: (i) to form a network of linked users from their address book records, and (ii) to search through the user records using the link information in response to a query.

For this exemplary embodiment, users register with the service and upload the contents of their address books to a server. A user record is then created for each user, which conceptually can be thought of as a user record node in a network of user records. The contents of the uploaded address book are stored at the user record node.

Additionally, the address book contents are examined to determine if they contain the numbers of any other users who have also registered with the service. If this is the case, links are formed between the node of the user whose address book is being examined, and each other user whose number was found in that address book. This link-forming process is repeated for every registered user, to give a network of links, each of which represent a social tie between two users.

Having established such a network of records, searching for a number is performed on a hop-by-hop basis by following the links from the node of a user who has made a search request, on the basis that the number a person is looking for is likely to be a number which one of their close friends or family also has in their address book.

Kraay describes a database tool to extract meaningful information from one or more databases, where such databases seem to contain only data noise, or else comprise seemingly unrelated data items. The databases in question (12, 14, 32) contain data such as connection logs and records of individual communication network subscribers with a corresponding network address on the PSTN, the Internet, etc. (column 4 lines 14 to 23), data entries of network addresses under scrutiny, e.g., a list of suspicious telephone numbers (column 4 lines 31 to 36), and biographical data related to the persons or products associated with each connection address in another database within the system (column 6 lines 21 to 23).

However Kraay does not disclose or teach anything like an address book, which is the "list of one or more user identifiers and/or user addresses" comprising the sub-set

defined in step (a) of claim 1. As will be appreciated, this is a separate sub-set of data which is "nested" within the received plurality of user record information regards.

On page 4 of the office action, the Examiner seems to refer only to the same Kraay data for the user record information, as well as the nested list required to be present therewithin (i.e., the sub-set of claim 1) of other user information. Thus, at least this feature of claim 1 is missing from Kraay.

Kraay also does not disclose or teach step (b) of claim 1 insofar as it requires the received user information records to be stored. The portion of Kraay identified by the Examiner does not describe this because, for example, the "third database" is, as far as can be ascertained, one containing data which is obtained independently of the data in the first and/or the second databases.

Also missing from Kraay is the creation of user records as covered in step (b), where the user records comprise sets of user record information, which in turn comprise user ID and/or addresses. The "subscriber records" of column 1 line 24 in Kraay do not comprise these.

Step (c) of claim 1 is also missing from Kraay. Kraay at column 5 lines 1 to 4 describe how the second computer program 18 compares telephone numbers in database 14 with those in database 12 (column 4 line 31 to column 5 line 4) to identify the numbers which appear in both databases. However, these telephone numbers do not comprise sub-sets of user record information which in turn also comprise user ID and/or addresses.

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The same comments apply *mutatis mutandis* against for other independent claims 7, 13 and 19.

Given these fundamental deficiencies of Kraay with respect to the above discussed features of independent claims, it is not believed necessary at this time to detail the additional deficiencies of this reference with respect to other features of the independent claims nor with respect to the additional features recited in the rejected dependent claims.

The rejection of claims 8 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being made “obvious” based on Kraay in view of De l’Etraz ‘541 is also respectfully traversed.

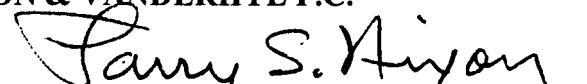
Fundamental deficiencies of Kraay have already been noted above with respect to parent claims. De l’Etraz does not supply those deficiencies. Accordingly, it is not believed necessary at this time to discuss the additional deficiencies of this allegedly “obvious” combination of references with respect to other features of the rejected dependent claims.

Accordingly, this entire application is now believed to be in condition for allowance and a formal Notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By:


Larry S. Nixon
Reg. No. 25,640

LSN:vc
901 North Glebe Road, 11th Floor
Arlington, VA 22203-1808
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100